

MEDIA ADVISORY
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JAEGER ANNOUNCES BEGINNING OF 20-DAY CORRECTION PERIOD FOR DUI REFERRAL

Bismarck, N.D. - Secretary of State Al Jaeger announced that the sponsoring committee organized to refer DUI legislation approved during the 2003 legislative session has fallen short of the required number of signatures and will be given twenty-days to make corrections.

Jaeger's announcement follows the completion of an intense review period conducted by the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office that began on July 7, following the submission of over 13,000 signatures by the sponsoring committee to refer House Bill 1161. House Bill 1161, approved by the 58th Legislative Assembly, reduces the level of alcohol concentration prohibited for motor vehicle operators from at least ten one-hundredths of one percent (.10) by weight to at least eight one-hundredths of one percent (.08) by weight. The submission of the petition signatures on July 7 also suspended House Bill 1161, which was scheduled to take effect on August 1.

According to Jaeger, as a part of the review, the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office reviewed 413 petitions and over 13,000 signatures of persons who signed the petitions. In addition, randomly selected signers were also mailed postcards asking if they had signed the petition in accordance with state law. The review revealed that of the 13,068 petition signatures submitted by the sponsoring committee, 865 were rejected, causing the petition to fall short of the required number of signatures by 641.

"Our review process is thorough and exhaustive," said Jaeger. "Each petition is measured and evaluated against the same set of criteria and standards. Judging from our review of the petitions and the responses of the randomly sampled signers, I am confident this petition was circulated according to the guidelines and standards set out by state law. In this particular petition effort, however, the sponsoring committee simply fell short of the required number of signatures."

In a letter to the sponsoring committee's chairman, Ralph Vinje, communicating that the group had fallen short, Jaeger also indicated that the sponsoring committee's twenty-day period to correct rejected signatures begins on August 7 and concludes on August 26. Of the 865 petition signatures rejected, there were 672 identified as correctable.

"If the petition circulators correct 641 of the correctable signatures within the designated twenty-day correction period, we will be able to validate the petition and certify the measure for inclusion on the 2004 June Primary Election ballot," said Jaeger.

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Attached, please find a copy of Jaeger's letter addressed to Ralph Vinje, chairman of the sponsoring committee, acknowledging the completion of the Secretary of State's review and the beginning of the sponsoring committee's twenty-day correction period. Also included is an updated timeline for the measure along with a summary of the signature review process completed by the Secretary of State's office.

Questions concerning the review process or the attached summary of the signature review process should be directed to Lee Ann Oliver, Elections Specialist, in the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office at (701) 328-4146.